

Approved by the meeting of Secretaries General, Helsinki, 27 Jan 2020

Technical amendments 13 March 2020

Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments

Guidelines for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in the EU

The Speakers of national Parliaments of the EU Member States and the President of the European Parliament assembled at the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments, Recalling the provisions of Articles 10.2 and 12 of the Treaty on European Union¹, have adopted these guidelines to document our common understanding of the forms and practice of inter-Parliamentary cooperation in the European Union, to collate the legal bases of such cooperation, and thus to promote the contribution of national Parliaments to the good functioning of the Union, as foreseen in Article 9 of the Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union.

1. Objectives and Scope of Inter-Parliamentary cooperation

The main objectives of inter-Parliamentary cooperation in the European Union are:

- a) To promote the exchange of information and best practices between the national Parliaments and the European Parliament with a view to reinforcing Parliamentary control, influence and scrutiny at all levels.
- b) To ensure effective exercise of Parliamentary competences in EU matters in particular in the area of monitoring the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.
- c) To promote cooperation with Parliaments from third countries.

2. Framework

Inter-Parliamentary cooperation in the European Union takes place within a framework of permanent, recurring and *ad hoc* inter-Parliamentary meetings. It is governed by treaty, EU secondary legislation or by joint agreement of the European Parliament and the national Parliaments. The framework includes support structures jointly set up by the European Parliament and national Parliaments.

2.1 The Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments

The Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments (“The EU Speakers’ Conference”, “EUSC”) is a forum for the exchange of opinions, information and experiences among the presiding officers of the national Parliaments in the EU and the President of the European Parliament. Topics relate to the role of Parliaments and the organisation of parliamentary functions. The EUSC also promotes research activities and common action with respect to the forms and instruments of inter-Parliamentary cooperation. The Conference, according to its Guidelines, oversees the coordination of inter-Parliamentary EU activities.

Documents:

[Stockholm Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments](#), 15 May 2010.

2.2 COSAC – The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union

COSAC is the conference referred to in Art. 10 of the protocol on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union, appended to the EU Treaty. COSAC may submit any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. COSAC shall in addition promote the exchange of information and best practice between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, including their sector committees. Contributions from the conference shall not bind national Parliaments and shall not prejudice their positions.

Documents:

[Protocol \(No 1\) on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union](#)

[Rules of Procedure of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union](#) (OJEU 2011/C 229/01).

2.3 The Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

The IPC CFSP/CSDP debates matters of Common Foreign and Security Policy, including Common Security and Defence Policy. The conference provides a framework for the exchange of information and best practices in the area of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), to enable national Parliaments and the European Parliament to be fully informed when carrying out their respective roles in this policy area.

Documents:

[Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy](#)

2.4 The Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union

The IPC SECG provides a framework for debate and exchange of information and best practices in implementing the provisions of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact). Its purpose is to strengthen cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament and contribute to ensuring democratic accountability in the area of economic governance and budgetary policy in the EU, particularly in the EMU.

Documents:

[Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union](#)

[Rules of Procedure of the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union](#)

2.5 The Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

The JPSG on Europol was created pursuant to Art. 88 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) for the scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament together with national Parliaments, to ensure the accountability and transparency of Europol. The JPSG monitors Europol's activities in fulfilling its mission, including as regards the impact of those activities on the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons. The JPSG's right to information and to be consulted are regulated in Art. 51 of the Europol regulation. A representative of the JPSG may attend meetings of the Management Board of Europol as a non-voting observer.

Documents:

[Art. 88 TFEU on Europol](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation \(Europol\)](#)
[Rules of Procedure of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol](#)

2.6 The Inter-Parliamentary committee Meeting for the Joint Evaluation of the Activities of Eurojust

An inter-Parliamentary committee meeting for the joint evaluation of the activities of Eurojust by the European Parliament and national Parliaments (ICM on Eurojust) has been established by Art. 67 of the Eurojust Regulation, pursuant to Art. 85 TFEU. The President of Eurojust shall appear before the inter-Parliamentary committee meeting once a year to discuss Eurojust's current activities and to present its annual report or other key documents of Eurojust.

Documents:

[Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation \(Eurojust\)](#)

2.7 Interparliamentary Cooperation on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency

A regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency was adopted by the Council and the European Parliament on 13 November 2019. The regulation foresees in Art. 112 that the European Parliament and the national parliaments may cooperate in the framework of Article 9 of Protocol No 1 on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union annexed to the TEU and to the TFEU.

Document:

[Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1896 Of The European Parliament And Of The Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard](#)

2.8 Other Inter-Parliamentary Meetings

The Parliament of the member state holding the rotating EU Council Presidency and the European Parliament can organise inter-parliamentary meetings or conferences on topics of common interest. These can take place in various formats, such as Joint Parliamentary Meetings, Joint Committee Meetings, meetings organised by the parliament of the presidency member state or the Inter-Parliamentary Committee Meetings (ICM) organised by the European Parliament.

When arranging these meetings, conveners take care to coordinate with the calendar of permanent inter-parliamentary meetings to avoid overlap and duplication of activity.

3. Support structures

3.1 Meeting of the Secretaries General of the EU Parliaments

The Secretaries General or other designated officials convene regularly in order to prepare the agenda and the debates of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments and to settle any other business that may be necessary. Meetings of the Secretaries General are prepared and chaired by the Secretary General or other designated officials of the Parliament that holds the presidency of the Conference of Speakers, after having consulted the preceding and the next presidencies.

The role of the meeting of Secretaries General is regulated in The Stockholm Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments, Art. 8 (*supra*).

3.2 Representatives of National Parliaments to the EU

National Parliaments' Representatives and Liaison Officers contribute to inter-parliamentary cooperation by facilitating a regular exchange of information among national Parliaments and between national Parliaments and the European institutions.

3.3 IPEX

IPEX, (InterParliamentary EU information eXchange) is a publicly accessible platform and a network for the exchange of information among the national Parliaments and the European Parliament. The IPEX is a collaborative effort. Its database contains draft legislative acts, consultation and information documents provided by the European Commission and information on the scrutiny of EU documents uploaded by the national Parliaments, including the subsidiarity procedure and political dialogue with the European Commission. IPEX serves as a web host and “institutional memory” for the EU’s permanent inter-parliamentary conferences. IPEX contains a Calendar of inter-parliamentary meetings and events in the European Union.

Documents:

[IPEX Guidelines](#), adopted by the Meeting of Secretaries General in 2015.

3.4 The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation

The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) is maintained by the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the national Parliaments of EU and CoE member states. The ECPRD provides a network for handling information requests from parliaments relating, among other things, to legislative experience and parliamentary practice. Seminars hosted by ECPRD member Parliaments enable participants from member Parliaments to exchange experience and practice.

Documents:

[Statutes of the ECPRD](#)

ⁱ Treaty on European Union, Art. 10.2

Citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament.

Member states are represented in the European Council by their Heads of State or Government and in the Council by their governments, themselves democratically accountable either to their national Parliaments, or to their citizens.

Treaty on European Union, Art. 12

National Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union:

- (a) through being informed by the institutions of the Union and having draft legislative acts of the Union forwarded to them in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union;
- (b) by seeing to it that the principle of subsidiarity is respected in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
- (c) by taking part, within the framework of the area of freedom, security and justice, in the evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the Union policies in that area, in accordance with Article 70 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and through being involved in the political monitoring of Europol and the evaluation of Eurojust's activities in accordance with Articles 88 and 85 of that Treaty;
- (d) by taking part in the revision procedures of the Treaties, in accordance with Article 48 of this Treaty;
- (e) by being notified of applications for accession to the Union, in accordance with Article 49 of this Treaty;
- (f) by taking part in the inter-Parliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and with the European Parliament, in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union.